

HISTORY AND PURPOSE

The purpose of the Neighborhood Traffic Project (NTP) Program is to reduce or manage the problem of cut-through traffic in residential neighborhoods by installing devices which physically change existing neighborhood streets. These devices are designed to alter the traffic circulation routes within the neighborhood without preventing public and emergency vehicle access to the neighborhood, or causing traffic to be diverted through other residential streets. The NTP program provides a variety of approved engineering devices to address the specific needs. Care must also be taken to avoid any potentially discriminatory effect.

The NTP program was initiated in 1993 and is governed by Article XV of the Code of Ordinances. The program is administered by the Public Works and Engineering Department, Maintenance and Right-of-Way Group, Traffic Management and Maintenance Division. For more detailed information regarding the ordinance or process, please refer to the City of Houston Code of Ordinances.

PROCESS

The following is an explanation of the NTP Process as illustrated in the flow chart on the reverse side. All public and privately funded projects must follow this process. The coordination of all projects is by the Department of Public Works and Engineering (Department).

1. APPLICATION

An application to the NTP program may be made by one or more property owners or residents within a neighborhood area, or by an authorized representative of a neighborhood association with evidence of residential support.

Complete applications are reviewed by the Department to determine eligibility and prioritize for further consideration. The review is based upon the following criteria:

- The identification of a traffic problem that could be resolved appropriately by the NTP program;

- The identification of a problem that could not be resolved by the installation of a non-NTP traffic control device;
- The existence of specific neighborhood data on land use and traffic problems;
- The evidence of public support for participation.

The Department evaluates the above information, and selects projects for planning in the next fiscal year.

2. FIRST PUBLIC MEETING

The purpose of the public meeting is to inform those present that an NTP request has been made and to explain the program. The Department determines the neighborhood planning boundary and notifies by mail all property owners and residents of the meeting. The neighborhood is to decide whether to proceed with program and if so, select a Neighborhood Traffic Committee (NTC). The NTC represents the neighborhood, and works with City staff in developing a concept traffic mitigation plan for the area. Public comments regarding the proposed project are recorded during the meeting, and written comments are accepted within a 14-day comment period following the meeting.

3. TRAFFIC STUDY

After the first public meeting, a traffic study is conducted in the neighborhood area to determine the nature and scope of the problem. The traffic data is the basis for continued project eligibility determined according to the following factors:

- The estimated percentage of cut-through traffic in the neighborhood area;
- The estimated percentage of heavy truck traffic through the neighborhood area;
- The percentage of residential land use in the neighborhood area;
- The presence or absence of sidewalks in the neighborhood area; and

- The evidence of neighborhood or community support for the proposed project.

Projects determined eligible proceed to concept plan development.

4. CONCEPT PLAN

The Department works in conjunction with the NTC to develop a concept traffic mitigation plan. A concept plan must include the least restrictive device that could address the problem and it can:

- Not deny pedestrian access to the neighborhood area;
- Not severely restrict the general mobility of traffic in the neighborhood area or the surrounding community;
- Not deny all vehicular access to any property;
- Not significantly delay emergency service vehicles;
- Not result in any potentially discriminatory effect.

The concept plan must be approved by an Interdepartmental Review Committee consisting of representatives from the City's Fire, Police, Planning and Development, Solid Waste, and Public Works and Engineering Departments and a representative from the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County. The City Attorney must provide a favorable review of the concept plan to assure compliance with all local, state and federal laws and regulations.

5. SECOND PUBLIC MEETING

A second public meeting is held to present approved concept plans. Notice of the meeting along with a copy of the concept plan and a comment card are mailed to all property owners and residents within the neighborhood area and participants in the previous meeting. Public comments regarding the plan will be taken during the meeting, and within a 14-day comment period following the meeting.

6. TESTING OF TEMPORARY DEVICES

The Department Director reviews all concept plans, contributing data, and public comment, and either approves or disapproves the plan. All approved concept plans must be tested by installing temporary traffic control device(s) for a minimum of 90 days.

7. THIRD PUBLIC MEETING

A third public meeting is held at the end of the temporary test period (between 90 and 210 days from installation). Notice of the meeting is sent to all property owners and residents in the neighborhood area and anyone who participated in the previous meetings. The plan is presented at the meeting and comments are taken. After a 14-day comment period following the meeting, the Director will review the available information and comments regarding the temporary device(s), and recommend either approval or denial of all or part of the concept plan. Recommended projects are forwarded to City Council and the temporary devices remain in place until the recommendations are approved or denied by City Council

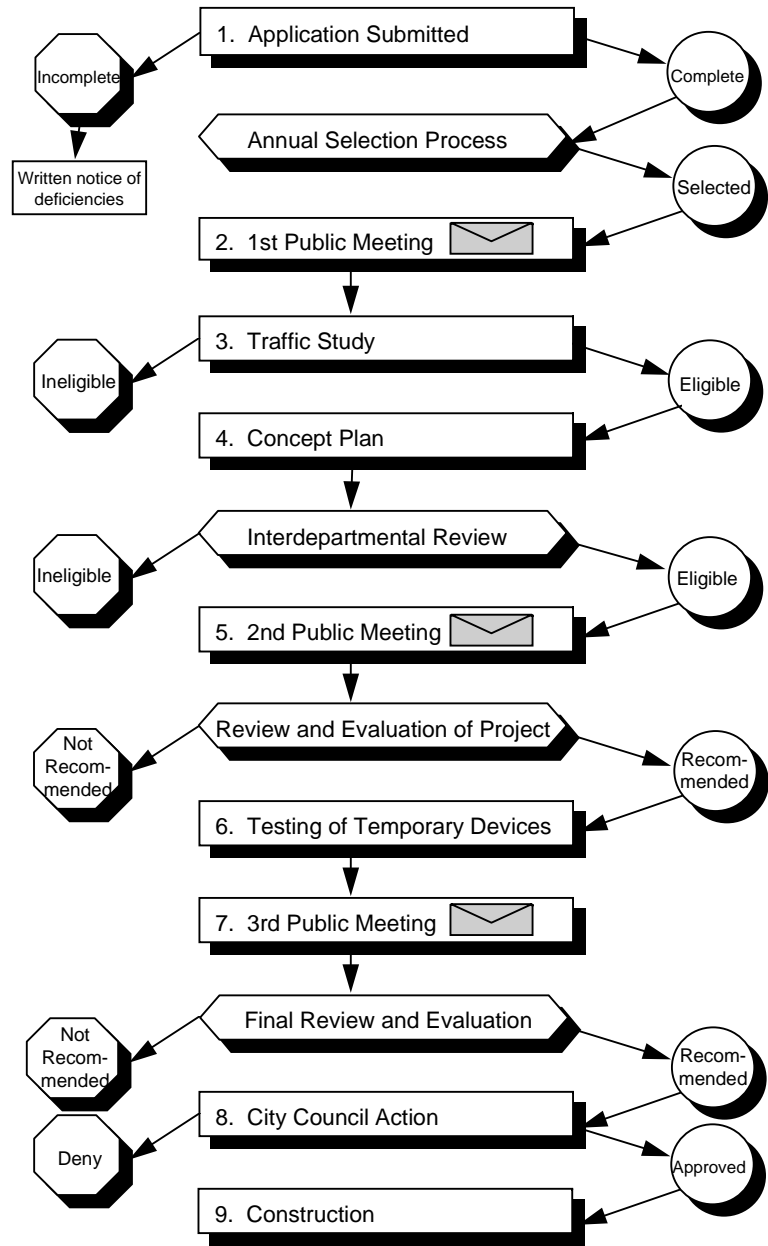
8. CITY COUNCIL ACTION

The decision by City Council will be final and not subject to further appeal or rehearing. The Department notifies the applicant in writing of Council’s action. Projects not approved are not allowed to file a new request for the same or similar project for three years.

9. CONSTRUCTION

The Director is responsible for oversight of construction for publicly and privately funded projects. All approved projects are reviewed every five years by the Director for continued viability. The City retains the right to remove any device or portion thereof if deemed necessary, regardless of the construction funding source.

NTP PROCESS



CITY OF HOUSTON

NEIGHBORHOOD
TRAFFIC PROJECT



Department of Public Works & Engineering
Maintenance & Right-of-Way Group
Traffic Management & Maintenance Division